



Ministério do Ambiente, do Ordenamento do Território e do Desenvolvimento Regional
Mecanismo Financeiro do Espaço Económico Europeu



European Economic Area Financial Mechanism 2004- 2009

Portugal

ANNUAL REPORT

January 2006

EEA Financial Mechanism

Portugal

ANNUAL REPORT

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Lisbon, January 23, 2006

1 Introduction

The Portuguese Focal Point presents the first Annual Report on the implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2004-2009 in Portugal.

The time frame of this report is the period March 2005 – January 2006, following the signature of the Memorandum of Understanding on 3 February 2005.

In this particular period a major government change occurred in Portugal, between February 20 and March 14 2005, inducing additional changes in the public administration structure. This fact, associated to the early implementation stage of the Financial Mechanism in Portugal, introduced the need to redesign the managerial system and to reset the mechanism focus areas.

For these reasons, the activities developed during this report's reference period were mostly of an organizational nature, including administrative and legal measures that had to be taken to ensure that a consistent structure was created with full capacity to achieve the objectives of the EEA Financial Mechanism.

This report describes the most relevant aspects of this stage of the implementation process, presenting the results of the actions taken in terms of the managerial system and the programming framework.

Communication and publicity were also an important concern in this stage and the most significant actions are reported.

The report includes also a presentation of the work plan prepared for the next 12 months period as well as a proposal for the review of Annexes B and C of the Memorandum of Understanding.

During this period of implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism in Portugal, the most productive cooperation was established with the Embassy of Norway in Portugal and a very good assistance was also received from the Financial Mechanism Office in Brussels. The Portuguese Focal Point is grateful for all this support and collaboration.

2 Implementation Process

2.1 Background

The implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism in Portugal, for the period 2004-2009, is defined in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the EFTA States and the Republic of Portugal, signed on February 3rd 2005. The former Ministry of Towns, Local Administration, Housing and Regional Development (MCALHDR) was the National Focal Point, having the overall responsibility for the management of the EEA Financial Mechanism in Portugal.

In the current Government structure, functions of the former MCALHDR, are now with the Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Regional Development (MAOTDR), where a task force conducted a review of the managerial set-up and the programming framework outlined in the MoU in order to proceed with the effective implementation of the Financial Mechanism.

On the basis of the MoU, priority was given to the Programme "Rota dos Castelos" under the responsibility of Parque Expo, S.A., being the only programme in Portugal benefiting from the EEA financial support during the period considered. Accordingly, Parque Expo was to be designated as representative of the National Focal Point for the overall management and implementation of the Financial Mechanism.

This configuration was considered by the current Ministry inadequate to fulfil the objectives that pertain both to the Protocol 38a and to the regional development and town policy defined by the Government of Portugal. Therefore, some adjustments were proposed to the FMO and discussed during a meeting in Lisbon on June 15, 2005.

As a result, the Portuguese Focal Point prepared an Addendum to the MoU, specifying the new implementation system. The Addendum was signed on October 27, 2005.

2.2 Preparatory Actions

Between July and September 2005, the Portuguese Focal Point carried on conversations with relevant ministries and other organizations in order to redefine the focus areas within the priority sectors described in Article 6º of the MoU. The programming framework was reviewed and a reorientation proposal was sent to the FMO on October 21, 2005.

This new framework was discussed with members of the Embassy of Norway in Portugal in a meeting held on December 6, 2005, and with the FMO in Brussels on December 7, 2005.

A new version of the financial frame and the open call for proposals programme was presented to the FMO on December 14, 2005. The final version was approved on January 18, 2006.

In the July – September period, a series of legal and administrative actions were taken to create the Financial Mechanism management structure as discussed with the FMO during the June 15 meeting. In September 2005 a first proposal of the composition of the management unit was presented to the Minister of Finances. However, an official decision was dependent on the formal approval of the Addendum to the MoU by the Donor States.

Finally, on November 30, 2006, a joint resolution of the Ministers of Environment, Spatial Planning and Regional Development (Focal Point) and Finances was published, creating the EEA Financial Mechanism national coordination unit and officially appointing the Head of the Focal Point.

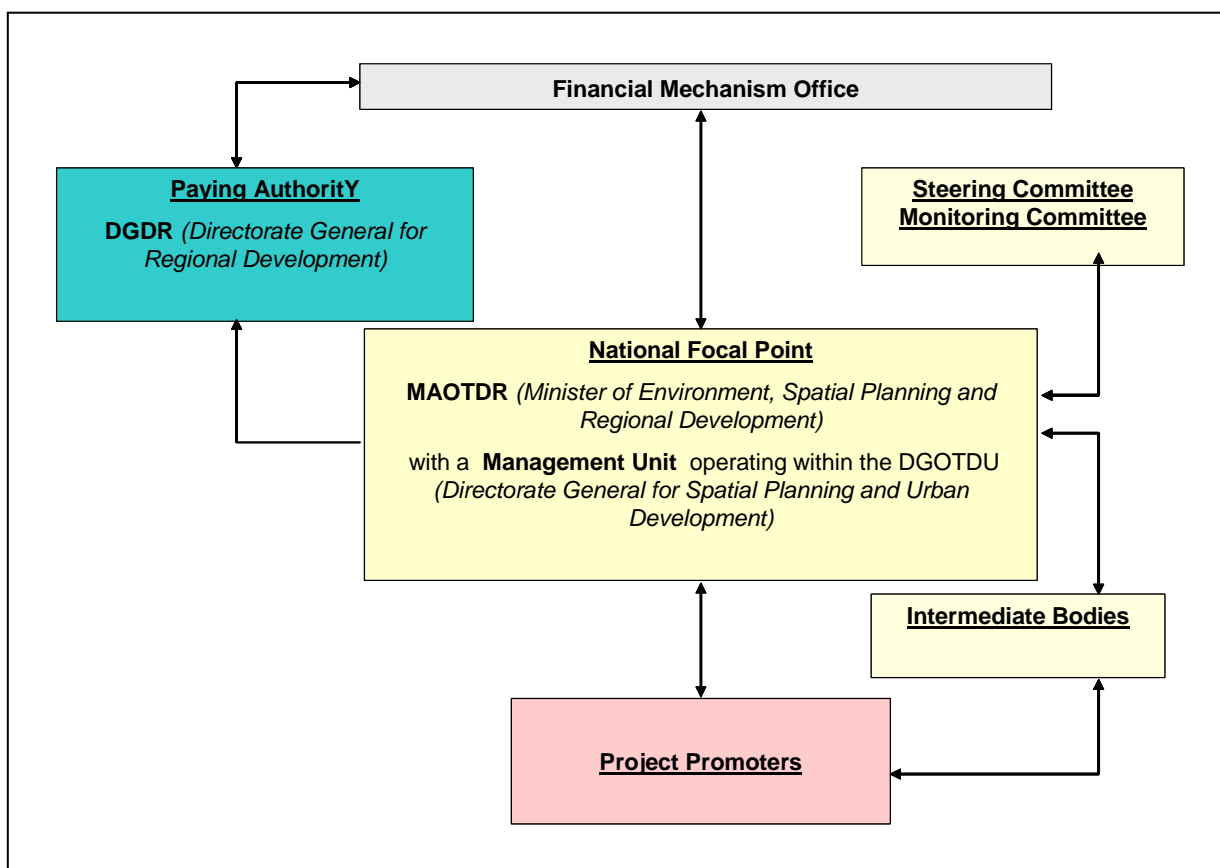
2.3 Managerial System

The diagram presented below shows the general structure for the implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2004-2009 in Portugal.

The management unit is the representative of the National Focal Point and the official contact with the FMO. This unit reports directly to the Secretary of State of Spatial Planning and Towns to whom the Minister of Environment; Spatial Planning and Regional Development has delegated the competency on the EEA Financial Mechanism.

The technical staff of the management unit is composed of three elements responsible for financial management, information management and project monitoring.

EEA Financial Mechanism - Implementation System



The composition of the Steering and the Monitoring Committees is the following:

Steering Committee:

- Head of the National Focal Point
- Representative of the Paying Authority (DGDR)
- Representative of the Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Regional Development (MAOTDR)
- Representative of the Ministry of Culture (MC)
- Representative of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MAPDR)
- Representative of the Secretary of State for Local Administration (SEAAL)
- Representative of the National Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT)
- Representative of National Association of Municipalities (ANMP)
- Representative of the national federation of NGO (Plataforma ONGD)
- Representatives of the National Economic and Social Council (CES)
- Representatives of the Azores and Madeira Regional Governments

Monitoring Committee:

- Representative of the National Focal Point
- Representative of the Norwegian Embassy¹
- Representative of the Paying Authority (DGDR)
- Representative of the Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Regional Development (MAOTDR)
- Representative of the Ministry of Culture (MC)
- Representative of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MAPDR)
- Representative of the Secretary of State for Local Administration (SEAAL)
- Representative of the National Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT)
- Representative of National Association of Municipalities (ANMP)
- Representatives of the National Economic and Social Council (CES)
- Representative of the national federation of NGO (Plataforma ONGD)
- Representatives of the Azores and Madeira Regional Governments

The first meeting of the Steering Committee is planned for February 15, 2006.

¹ observer

2.4 Programming Framework

The table below shows the allocation of the overall grant amount available for Portugal, as approved on January 18, 2006.

Description	Euros
Total allocated amount 2004-2009	31 320 000
FMO management costs	1 252 800
Total net amount 2004- 2009	30 067 200
FMO costs for appraisal, monitoring and ex-post evaluation	939 600
Total available for Projects, Programmes and other Funds	29 127 600
Technical Assistance Fund	783 000
NGO Fund	2 038 932
Scholarship Fund	291 276
Individual Projects	17 476 560
Critical Urban Areas Programme	8 537 832
Total	31 320 000

Individual Projects in any of the priority sectors defined in Article 6 of the MoU may be submitted on an open call for proposals basis. The funds will be managed by an intermediary body to be selected also upon an open call procedure.

The Critical Urban Areas programme (CUA) is a central government initiative that draws upon the experience of the 1999-2003 Financial Instrument. A formal application for grant assistance will be submitted in July 2006. Therefore, the amount tentatively allocated does not represent a commitment of the Financial Mechanism.

In the framework of the tentative allocation of funds approved by the FMO, the Portuguese Focal Point defined the following Open Calls programme:

OPEN CALL CALENDAR				
Open Call for Proposals	Priority Sectors	Indicative Amount (euros)	Lauching Date	Closing Date
No. 1 - 70% of amount available for Individual Projects	<i>See next section</i>	12 233 592	January 2006	April 2006
No.2 - NGO Fund		2 038 932	June 2006	September 2006
No.3 - Scholarship Fund		291 276	April 2006	June 2006
No.4 - 30% of amount available for Individual Projects	to be defined	5 242 968	January 2007	April 2007

The need to define additional calls during the period 2008-2009 will depend on the fulfilment of this programme. An evaluation will be made during 2007 and it will be presented at the 2008 Annual Meeting.

3 Open Call No.1 for Individual Projects

The launching of the first open call for proposals for Individual Projects is in preparation and will be launched till the end of January or early February.

The amount allocated to this first call is 12 233 592 Euros, representing 70% of the total amount available for individual projects. The proposed distribution of this amount per priority sector is shown in the following table.

1st Call for Proposals for Individual Projects		
Priority Sector	Percentage of total amount	Million Euros
Cultural Heritage	45%	5.505116
Environment	20%	2.446718
Sustainable Development	15%	1.835039
Human Resources	5%	0.611680
Health and Childcare	5%	0.611680
Academic Research	10%	1.223359
Total amount	100%	12.233592

The focus areas defined for this first call for proposals are:

Priority Sector	Focus Areas
Conservation of European cultural heritage	Protection and renewal of immovable cultural heritage
	Improvement of care and protection of movable cultural heritage
	Renewal of urban areas and historical parts in regions
	Renewal of historical and cultural heritage in regions
	Small-scale revitalisation of brown fields in towns and municipalities
Protection of the environment, including the human environment, through inter alia, reduction of pollution and promotion of renewable energy.	Reduction of pollution, mainly in urban public transport
	Improvement of water management systems
	Coastal management
Promotion of sustainable development through improved resource use and management.	Sustainable forest management
	Implementation of sustainable public service centres in rural areas
	City networks for competition and internationalisation
Human resource development	Modernisation of public administrations and social services
	Promotion of gender equality in public local administrations
Health and Childcare	
Academic Research and development	<i>Any of the priority sectors in Article 6 of the MoU (Memorandum of Understanding)</i>

The Portuguese Focal Point has defined some criteria for project preference that will help in a preliminary appraisal of applications. These criteria correspond to the following project characteristics:

- a) Sector integration: combination of priority sectors; preference for projects regarding more than one priority sector;
- b) Spatial integration: creation of spatial networks; preference for projects promoting related interventions in several locations or promoting co-operation of similar organizations in different locations;
- c) Integration of actors: creation of public-private partnerships; preference for projects including interventions of both public and private organizations;
- d) Durability of results: duration of project results; preference for projects presenting durable regional or local development impacts;
- e) Innovation: preference for projects promoting innovative solutions;
- f) Regional value added: preference for projects creating value added on the basis of organizational and immaterial interventions;
- g) Strategic framework: preference for projects respecting Strategic Programs

Applicants will be invited to enhance the local/regional impacts of the projects in terms of long term duration of impacts, job creation, increase in regional value-added, modernization; improvement of the regional innovation capability.

4 Block Grants

4.1 Technical Assistance Fund

An application for the Technical Assistance Fund (TAF) is now being concluded and it will be submitted until January 31, 2006.

The amount allocated to Technical Assistance is 783 000 Euros, representing 2.5% of the total amount available for projects, programmes and other funds.

The TAF will be used to support management costs of the National Focal Point.

4.2 Non Government Organizations Fund

An open call to select an intermediary body for the management of the Non Government Organizations (NGO) Fund will be launched in June 2006. The intermediary body will define the terms for submission of applications.

The total amount available for the NGO Fund is 2.038 million Euros, but additional assistance can be provided in the framework of individual projects.

4.3 Scholarship Fund

The scholarship fund was determined in Annex C of the MoU. The amount allocated to this type of assistance is 0.291 million Euros. An intermediary body will be selected to manage this fund.

5 Critical Urban Areas Programme

The Critical Urban Areas programme (CUA) is a central government initiative that pretends to capitalize over the experience and the programmes of intervention on stressed urban areas. It will be focused on three deprived neighbourhoods. Programmes in each neighbourhood will be prepared in the framework of local partnerships and on the basis of public call for projects.

The programme draws upon the experience of the 1999-2003 Financial Instrument, but new criteria were introduced to improve the effectiveness of results. The design of the programme will respect the following six guiding principles:

- *Operations targeted to innovation: deprived urban areas can be a territory of social or technological innovation;*
- *Mobilizing projects with structural impact: each operation must have a core project with a high mobilizing potential and a high potential to change the neighbourhood conditions;*
- *Focus on rehabilitation and qualification: actions must qualify the living conditions in the neighbourhood and be geared towards a global project of urban integration of these areas;*
- *Strategic coordination and community participation: a powerful leadership to put together the diverse initiatives and a partnership agreement which emphasize the role of community and the commitment of key people and institutions;*
- *New financing sources: benefit from people's resources (work, initiative, etc.), mobilize private funds in a context of public-private partnership*
- *Value for money and durability of results: projects must be accountable and live or, at least, its results remain after the end of the intervention*

The programme has not yet been presented to the FMO for appraisal as a Task Force involving 6 Ministries is still designing it under the coordination of Instituto Nacional da Habitação (INH). The programme will be multi-disciplinary and it will seek innovative solutions in terms of urban rehabilitation and social insertion.

6 Communication and Publicity

Since July 2005, after the first meeting with the FMO, the Portuguese Focal Point became very much aware of the importance of communication and publicity. Unfortunately, the lack of definition of the management structure and the programming framework did not facilitate the implementation of a structured communication action plan until the beginning of December 2005.

In this period, a telephone line was opened in the Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Regional Development (MAOTDR) to give information, upon request, on the availability of the fund, the implementation system that was being created and the time frame for the submission of proposals. Several organizations, mostly local government authorities and a few research institutes contacted the Focal Point for this kind of information.

In December 2005 a formal announcement on the availability of the Financial Mechanism was made both on the MAOTDR and the DGOTDU² Websites.

Simultaneously, a dedicated website began to be created and is now waiting for formal approval by the National Communications Authority. The website should be operational during February 2006. In the meantime, the MAOTDR and the DGOTDU websites will continue to provide updated information on the implementation of the Mechanism.

During January, the Focal Point prepared a brochure (Annex III) and distributed it within relevant Ministries and other organizations.

The Communication Action Plan for the first semester of 2006 includes:

² DGOTDU – Direcção Geral de Ordenamento do Território e Desenvolvimento Urbano – is the Public service where the EEA Financial Mechanism management unit is located.

Activity	Target Group	Date
General information workshop for relevant Ministries	Intermediary Bodies; Potential applicants	6 January
1 st Open call announcement	Potential applicants	January
Open call press release	General	January
Open call e-mailing	Municipalities, Research Institutes, NGO, Local Development Associations	January /February
Launch of Website (eeagrants.org.pt)	General	February
Workshop on application procedures and selection criteria	Potential applicants	February
Brochure re-distribution	Potential applicants	February
Open telephone line for information on application procedures	Potential applicants	January to April 2005
Publication of the list of projects selected by the Portuguese Steering Committee on website	Applicants, general	May
E-mailing to NGO	NGO potential applicants	May
Open Call for NGO	NGO	June
Open Call for NGO Press Release	General	June
Letters to 1st open call applicants informing them of outcome of appraisal process and grant agreement preparation	Applicants	June
Publication of list of projects approved in the 1 st call	Applicants, Potential Applicants	June

7 Work Plan for 2006-2007

The next 12 months period will correspond to the first stage of implementation of the Financial Mechanism in Portugal. The Portuguese Focal Point defined the following Work Plan for the period January 2006 / January 2007:

- i) Launching of the first Open Call for Proposals for Individual projects - end of January or beginning of February 2006;
- ii) First meeting of the Steering Committee – February 2006
- iii) Seminar for potential applicants to the first open call for proposals, in collaboration with the Embassy of Norway in Lisbon - February / March 2006;
- iv) Selection of an intermediary body for the Scholarship Fund – April 2006;
- v) Preliminary appraisal of proposals for Individual Projects submitted to the first open call for proposals – April / May 2006;
- vi) Steering Committee meeting for final decision on proposals for Individual projects to be submitted to the FMO – April / May 2006;
- vii) Submission of proposals for Individual Projects to the Financial Mechanism Office - May 2006;
- viii) Open Call for proposal to select an intermediary body for the NGO Fund – June 2006
- ix) Assistance to the preparation of the CUA programme application and submission to the FMO – June/July 2006
- x) Preparation of Grant Agreements for Individual projects approved under the first call for proposals – July 2006
- xi) Seminar on project management and reporting for project promoters – September 2006
- xii) Submission of proposals on intermediary bodies for the Scholarship and the NGO Fund – September / October 2006
- xiii) Periodic meetings for assistance and monitoring approved projects – October 2006 / January 2007;
- xiv) Launching the second open call for proposals for Individual Projects – January 2007
- xv) Preparation of the 2007 Annual Report and Annual Meeting – January / February 2007

8 Review of Annex B and C of the MoU

Considering the reorientation of the programming framework discussed with the FMO in order to apply the Financial Mechanism to any of the priority sectors listed in Article 6 of the MoU instead of concentrating all the assistance in only two or three sectors, the Portuguese Focal Point proposes a review of Annexes B and C of the Memorandum.

Annex B

In addition to the priority areas indicated, the following focus areas within the Environment and the Sustainable Development priority sectors were defined:

Protection of the environment:

- Reduction of pollution, mainly in urban public transport
- Improvement of water management systems
- Coastal management

Promotion of sustainable development:

- Sustainable forest management
- Implementation of sustainable public service centres in rural areas
- City networks for competition and internationalisation

These areas were selected for their potential contribution to the objectives of Protocol 38A and also because they represent important development concerns for Portugal.

For the same reasons, academic research should focus also the environment sector and sustainable development.

Annex C

Modification of Annex C is a result of the tentative allocation of funds agreed with the FMO and the need to make some financial adjustments. The major changes are:

- withdrawal of the Seed Money facility;
- replacement of the Academic Research programme for Individual Research Projects in any of the priority sectors.

ANNEX I

**Call for proposals – for submission of INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS
within the framework of the EEA Financial Mechanism in Portugal**

**The Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Regional Development,
National Focal Point of the EEA Financial Mechanism in Portugal,**

Announces on 10 February 2006 the **Call for Proposals nº 1** for the submission of **applications for Individual Projects** within the framework of the **EEA Financial Mechanism in the priority areas specified in the following table.**

Priority Sector	Focus Areas
Conservation of European cultural heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protection and renewal of immovable cultural heritage - Improvement of care and protection of movable cultural heritage - Renewal of urban areas and historical parts in regions - Renewal of historical and cultural heritage in regions - Small-scale revitalisation of brown fields in towns and municipalities
Protection of the environment, including the human environment, through inter alia, reduction of pollution and promotion of renewable energy.	Reduction of pollution, mainly in urban public transport
	Improvement of water management systems
	Coastal management
Promotion of sustainable development through improved resource use and management.	Sustainable forest management
	Implementation of sustainable public service centres in rural areas
	City networks for competition and internationalisation
Human resource development	Modernisation of public administrations and social services
	Promotion of gender equality in public local administrations
Health and Childcare	
Academic Research and development	<i>Any of the priority sectors in Article 6 of the MoU (Memorandum of Understanding)</i>

1. The total amount available for this Call for proposals is 12.233.592 EUR within the allocation of 2004-2009³.

The grant rate will be determined on a case-by case basis, as the minimum necessary to allow the project to proceed. The maximum contribution from the EEA Financial mechanism in the form of grants may not exceed 60% of the total eligible project cost

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- ³ The total net amount of the allocation for the period 2004-2009 is 29.127.600 Euros. From this amount, 60% (17.476.560 EUR) is allocated to individual projects. The remaining is indicatively allocated to Block Grants, Programmes and Technical Assistance. The amount of this call corresponds to 70% of the total amount for individual projects. The remaining 30% (5.242.968 EUR) will be allocated in a new call, to be launched in January 2007.

except for projects otherwise financed by central or local government budget allocations, where the contribution may not exceed 85% of the total eligible cost. The amount of grant assistance from the EEA Financial Mechanism should not be less than **250,000 EUR**.

2. Eligible Applicants:

All public or private bodies and any organization constituted as legal entity in Portugal and operating in the public interest - e.g., national and local authorities, education/research institutions, environmental bodies, community organisations and public-private partnerships may apply for assistance.

3. Eligible Priority Sectors/Focus Areas:

Eligible applicants may submit complete applications for Individual Projects, provided the project proposal is within the overall framework of priority sectors of the EEA Financial Mechanism, particular attention shall be given to the focus areas.

4. Project Selection Criteria

In addition to the **assessment criteria included in the FMO Appraisal Manual**, a secondary assessment will be made with a consideration to the following project characteristics:

- h) Sector integration: combination of priority sectors; preference for projects regarding more than one priority sector;
- i) Spatial integration: creation of spatial networks; preference for projects promoting related interventions in several locations or promoting co-operation of similar organizations in different locations;
- j) Integration of actors: creation of public-private partnerships; preference for projects including interventions of both public and private organizations;
- k) Durability of results: duration of project results; preference for projects presenting durable regional or local development impacts;
- l) Innovation: preference for projects promoting innovative solutions;
- m) Regional value added: preference for projects creating value added on the basis of organizational and immaterial interventions;
- n) Strategic framework: preference for projects respecting Strategic Programs.

Applications should enhance the local/regional impacts of the projects in terms of long term duration of impacts, job creation, increase in regional value-added, modernization; improvement of the regional innovation capability.

5. Deadline and address for submission of applications

The deadline for submission of applications is:

- **16:00 o'clock on 10 May 2006**

All applications within the framework of this call for proposals for Individual Projects must be sent to the following addresses:

European Economic Area Financial Mechanism
National Focal Point
Campo Grande 50- 3º
1749 014 LISBOA

or:

Manuel Leal Pisco

Coordenador do Mecanismo Financeiro do Espaço Económico Europeu
Campo Grande nº 50,3º

1749-014 Lisboa

Tel: +351 21 7825 090

Fax: +351 21 7825 004

E-mail: mpisco@dgotdu.pt

6. Procedure for submitting applications

Applications will be processed in the prescribed format in Portuguese and English. For an electronic version of the application form, click [here](#). Click for an electronic version of the [application form](#), [user guide](#) and [examples of indicators](#).

Applications with all supporting documents must be submitted in **one printed original and 2 printed copies in each language**. The application must also be supplied in electronic format (floppy disk or CD-rom) in both languages. Please mark the applications ‘Original’ and ‘Copy’ as needed. The complete set of application forms in both languages and in electronic format must be submitted in a sealed envelope (the sticker/seal must be signed by an authorised representative or stamped with the official stamp of the applicant).

The outer envelope must bear the full name and address of the applicant, and include the sentences: "Not to be opened before the opening session" and "INDIVIDUAL PROJECT within the framework of the EEA Financial Mechanism" and its equivalent in Portuguese: "Não abrir antes da sessão de abertura" "PROJECTO INDIVIDUAL ao abrigo do financiamento do Mecanismo Financeiro EEE".

7. Information for processing of applications

All further relevant information regarding the processing of applications will be published on the web site of the Mecanismo Financeiro do Espaço Económico Europeu in: www.dgotdu.pt/destaques or www.eeagrants.org.pt (in preparation)

All general rules and guidelines are available in English via the web site of the Financial Mechanism Office:

www.eeagrants.org

8. Further information

Questions may be sent by e-mail or by fax no later than 21 days before the relevant deadline for the receipt of proposals to the address listed below, indicating a clear reference to the call for proposals:

8.1 Mr. Manuel Leal Pisco

Mecanismo Financeiro do Espaço Económico Europeu

Tel. no: +351.21 7825 090

Fax: +351.21 7825 004

E-mail address: mpisco@dgotdu.pt

A reply will be sent within 10 days and no later than 11 days before the deadline for the submission of proposals.

Questions that may be relevant to other applicants, together with the answers, will be published on the web site of the Mecanismo Financeiro do Espaço Económico Europeu : www.dgotdu.pt/destaques or www.eeagrants.org.pt (in preparation)

ANNEX II

MAIS INFORMAÇÃO

Financial Mechanism Office

12-16, Rue Joseph II, B-1000 Brussels, Belgium

Tel: +32 (0)2 286 17 01 · Fax: +32 (0)2 286 17 89 · E-mail: fmo@efta.int

LIGAÇÕES ÚTEIS

www.eeagrants.org · www.noruega.org.pt · www.maotdr.gov.pt - www.dgotdu.pt

MECANISMO FINANCEIRO do ESPAÇO
ECONÓMICO EUROPEU

Unidade Nacional de Gestão

Campo Grande, nº 50, 3º - 1747-014 Lisboa, Portugal

Tel: +351 21 7825 090 · Fax: +351 21 7825 004

Email: mpisco@dgotdu.pt – www.eeagrants.org.pt (em
breve)

MECANISMO FINANCEIRO DO ESPAÇO ECONÓMICO EUROPEU

Solidarity
Opportunity
Cooperation

INTRODUÇÃO:

O Mecanismo Financeiro do Espaço Económico Europeu foi alargado, em 1 de Maio de 2004, a mais 10 países: Chipre, República Checa, Estónia, Hungria, Letónia, Lituânia, Malta, Polónia, Eslováquia e Eslovénia, visando contribuir para o nivelamento económico destes novos países aderentes, bem como da Grécia, Espanha e Portugal, os três países da UE-15 que já beneficiavam deste fundo. É também objectivo deste mecanismo fortalecer as relações bilaterais com os Estados beneficiários.

Portugal assinou um Memorando de Entendimento (MoU) em Fevereiro de 2005 a que se seguiu uma Adenda decorrente das alterações governamentais entretanto ocorridas.

Para utilização deste apoio financeiro, foi criada, por Despacho Conjunto dos Ministros do Ambiente, do Ordenamento do Território e do Desenvolvimento Regional e de Estado e das Finanças, uma estrutura de gestão constituída por um Coordenador Nacional e por um Secretariado Técnico. Esta estrutura está em funcionamento desde o início de Dezembro de 2005.

ÁREAS PRIORITÁRIAS DE INTERVENÇÃO

As áreas prioritárias de intervenção apoiadas pelo mecanismo financeiro em Portugal serão as que decorrem do Artigo 6º do Memorando de Entendimento (MoU)

- Protecção do Ambiente, incluindo o ambiente humano, através da redução da poluição e da promoção das energias renováveis;
- Promoção do desenvolvimento sustentável através da melhoria do uso e gestão dos recursos;
- Conservação do património cultural europeu, incluindo redes de transportes públicos e reabilitação urbana;
- Desenvolvimento de recursos humanos através, entre outros, da promoção de educação e formação, da capacitação da instituições em termos de serviços públicos e administrativos, assim como os processos democráticos que os suportam;
- Saúde e cuidados a crianças

A investigação académica pode ser elegível desde que seja orientada a um ou mais sectores prioritários.

Os programas de concurso poderão ser dirigidos explicitamente a determinados sectores/destinatários no âmbito do artigo 6º do Memorando de Entendimento (MoU).

QUEM PODE CANDIDATAR-SE?

As propostas poderão ser apresentadas por quaisquer entidades, públicas ou privadas, assim como Organizações Não-Governamentais legalmente constituídas em Portugal.

Sendo assim, estão abrangidas pelo fundo:

- autoridades de governo central, regional e local;
- instituições de ensino e investigação;
- entidades ambientais;
- organizações comunitárias e de voluntariado;
- outras entidades privadas;
- parcerias público-privadas.

COMO OBTER O APOIO FINANCEIRO?

As propostas são submetidas para aprovação à Unidade Nacional de Gestão do fundo. As propostas deverão seguir os procedimentos e regras da UE, os requisitos formais do Mecanismo Financeiro e ser coincidentes com as suas áreas prioritárias. Caso a Unidade Nacional de Gestão aprove a proposta, esta é reencaminhada para o Gabinete do Mecanismo Financeiro (FMO) em Bruxelas, onde cada projecto candidato será analisado em pormenor. A Comissão Europeia tem também um papel activo de revisão das propostas. A proposta é submetida para aprovação ao órgão de decisão, o Comité do Mecanismo Financeiro. De uma decisão positiva resultará um contrato de apoio financeiro para o projecto entre o Estado beneficiário e o Comité do Mecanismo Financeiro. A atribuição de fundos obriga a uma situação de co-financiamento pelo destinatário final. Os Estados beneficiários promoverão concursos para submissão de propostas. Os potenciais candidatos poderão contactar a Unidade Nacional de Gestão e consultar a documentação de apoio disponível.

